Katie French

I started elementary school in Coventry, Rhode Island at Hopkins Hill School. I don’t remember ever having any really bad experiences during elementary school and remember it being an easy, worry free time in my life. I remember second grade especially well and most of those memories are pretty fond. I remember I had Mrs.Dejulio, the previous year I had her as well and she actually had all the students stay together from our class the year before too. I thought this was really unique and this created a class environment that we came into on the first day already feeling comfortable and familiar in. Mrs.Dejulio is one of my favorite teachers I’ve ever had, she cared about each one of us individually and always found time to give us extra time if we needed it. We had a morning routine where we would say the pledge of allegiance, sing the national anthem or sometimes a different song, and then would have a circle time on the rug. We would go over things we learned the previous day and still things going on in class, the weather, etc. Hopkins Hill wasn’t one of the nicest schools in Rhode Island but compared to the school I’ve learned about in Savage Inequalities, it now seems really sufficient. We had a well-equipped classroom with all sorts of supplies and books, a white board, nice tables and chairs, and everything seemed clean or up to date. This seems like all really basic stuff but not all schools in our country have even these basic necessities. We had a special, like gym or art, every day of the week and then every day we had lunch time and recess as well. In second grade I was reading small chapter books, learning cursive, and doing basic math, mostly addition and subtraction with a start on multiplication. As a second grader I would have never even worried about having school supplies or contaminated water, or any of the things the kids in East St. Louis have to deal with on a day to day basis. Not only was I living and going to school in a nice area where funds weren’t a big issue, but I was also getting a much better education that the kids in East St. Louis. I feel that children’s education and motivation to learn has a lot to do with the teacher. My teacher was always positive and because she was interested in us, we were interested in what she was teaching. I don’t remember even not liking school or resisting my work. Because I had positive role models in my life I viewed school as if it was something fun and I always had support, whether it be from my teachers or parents, to do well in school. In Savage Inequalities it seems that a lot of teachers have lost hope to improve the school system and in turn this has effected a lot of the student’s attitude toward school as well. Although not all years of elementary schools were as good as my second grade experience, I have consistently received a good education with supportive teachers and great environments throughout my whole life.